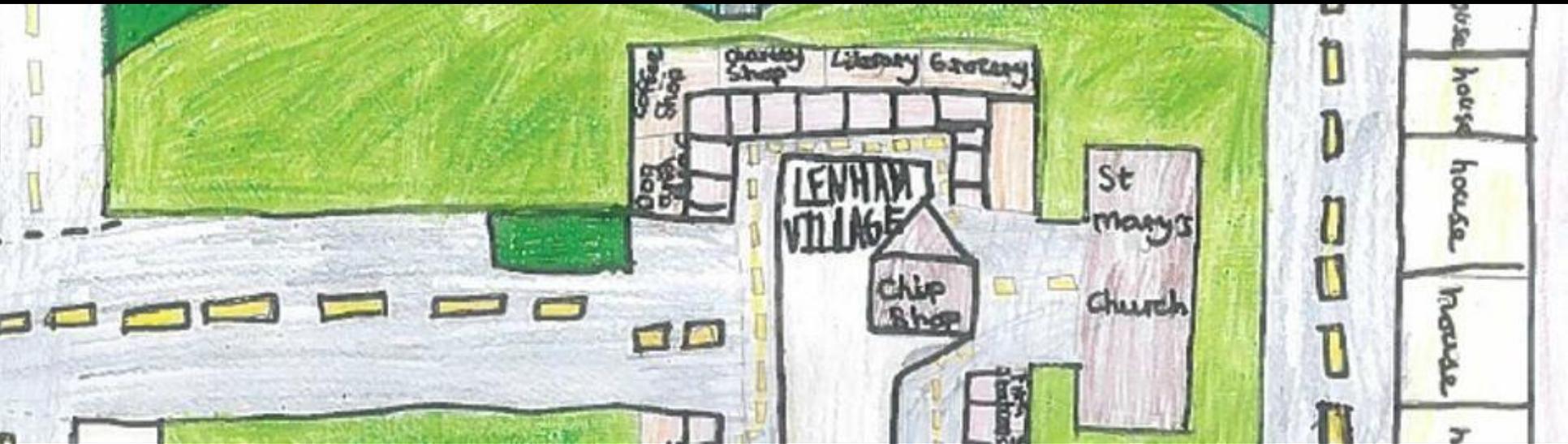


Catch them young

Engaging children with maps and mapping



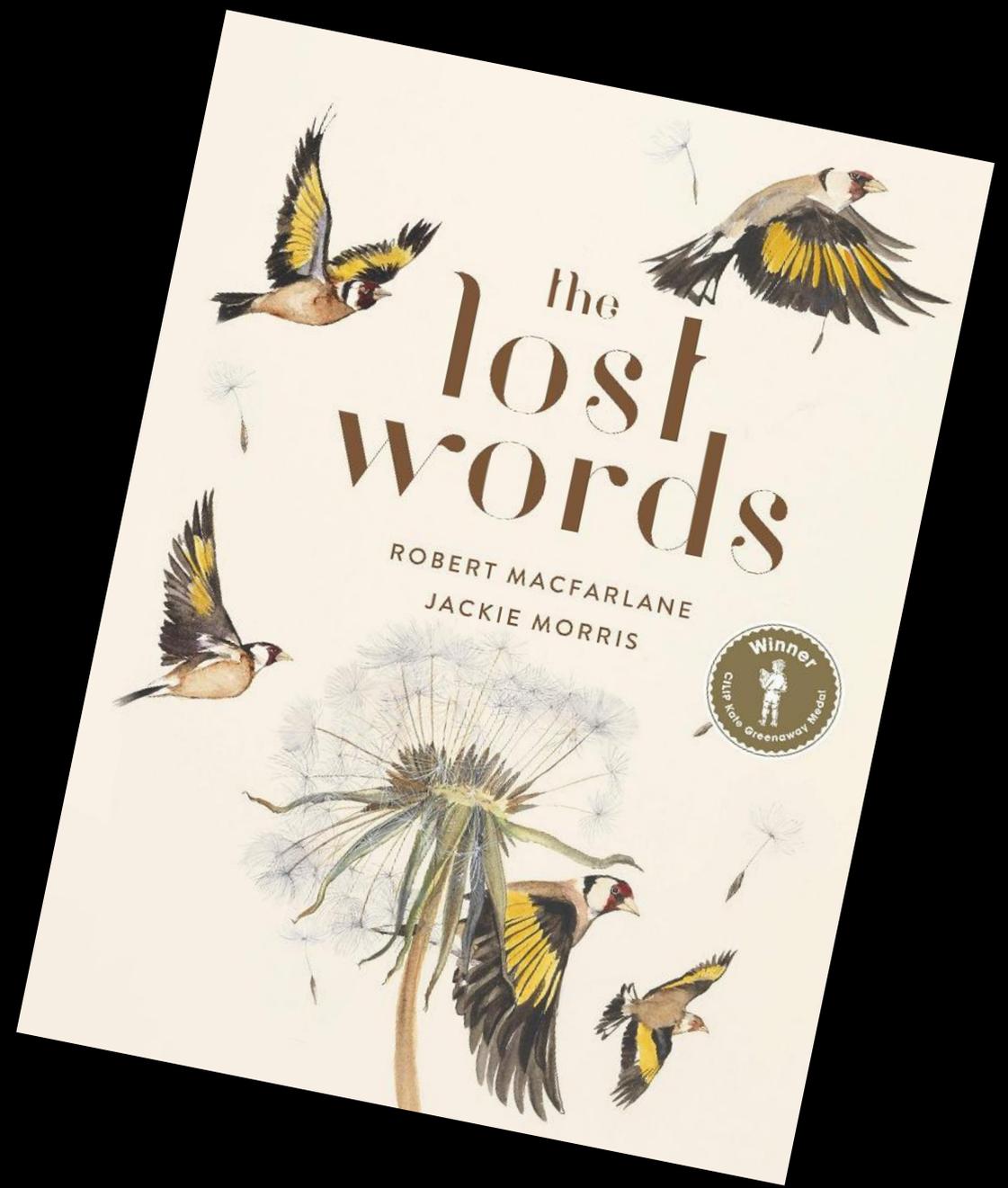
Peter Vujakovic, Paula Owens & Stephen Scoffham

Canterbury Christ Church University

Peter Vujakovic – peter.vujakovic@canterbury.ac.uk, Paula Owens –
p.owens83@canterbury.ac.uk, Stephen Scoffham -
s.scoffham848@canterbury.ac.uk

“We do not care for what we do not know, and on the whole we do not know what we cannot name.”

Robert Macfarlane



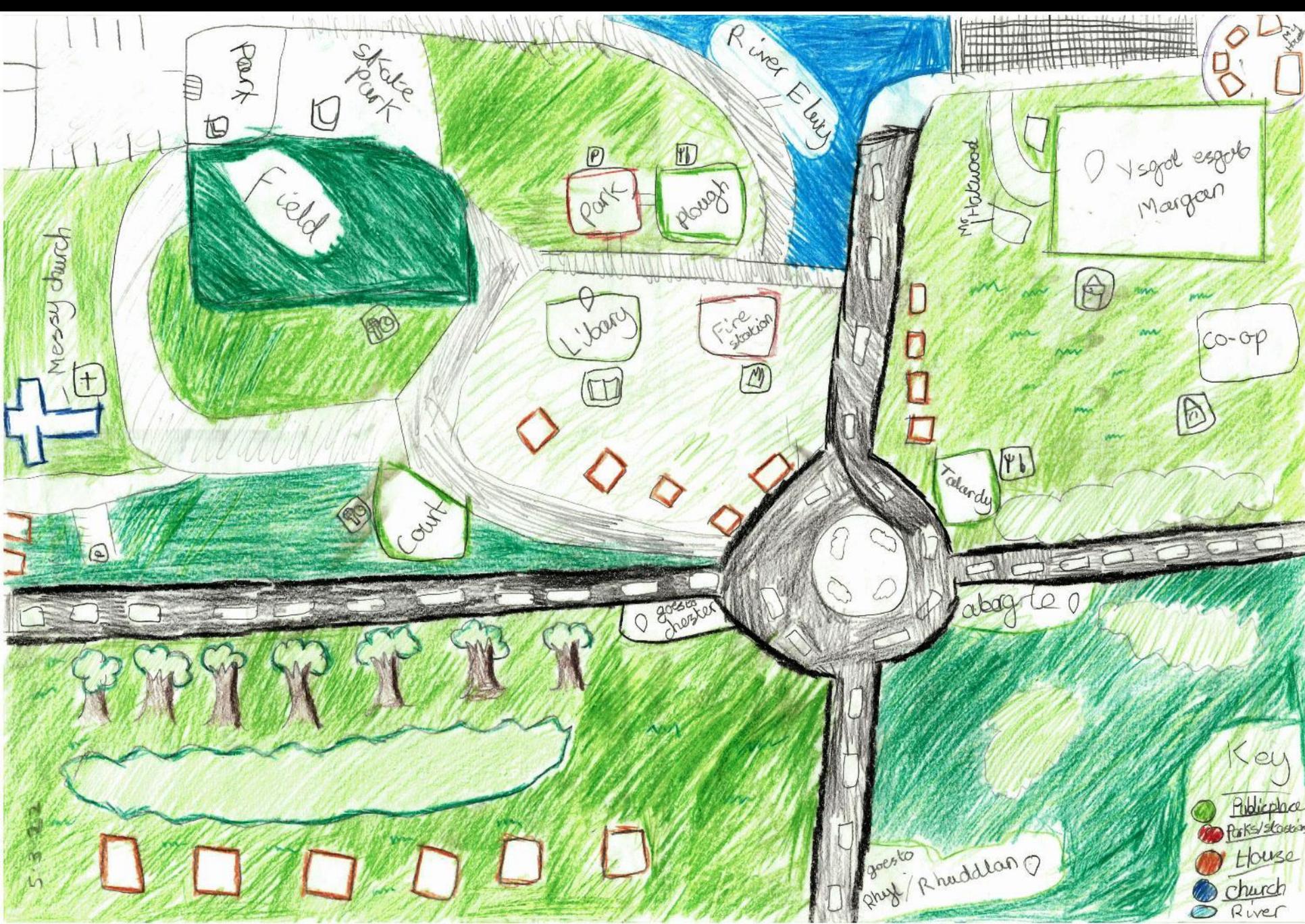
Meaningful maps

<http://meaningfulmaps.org/>



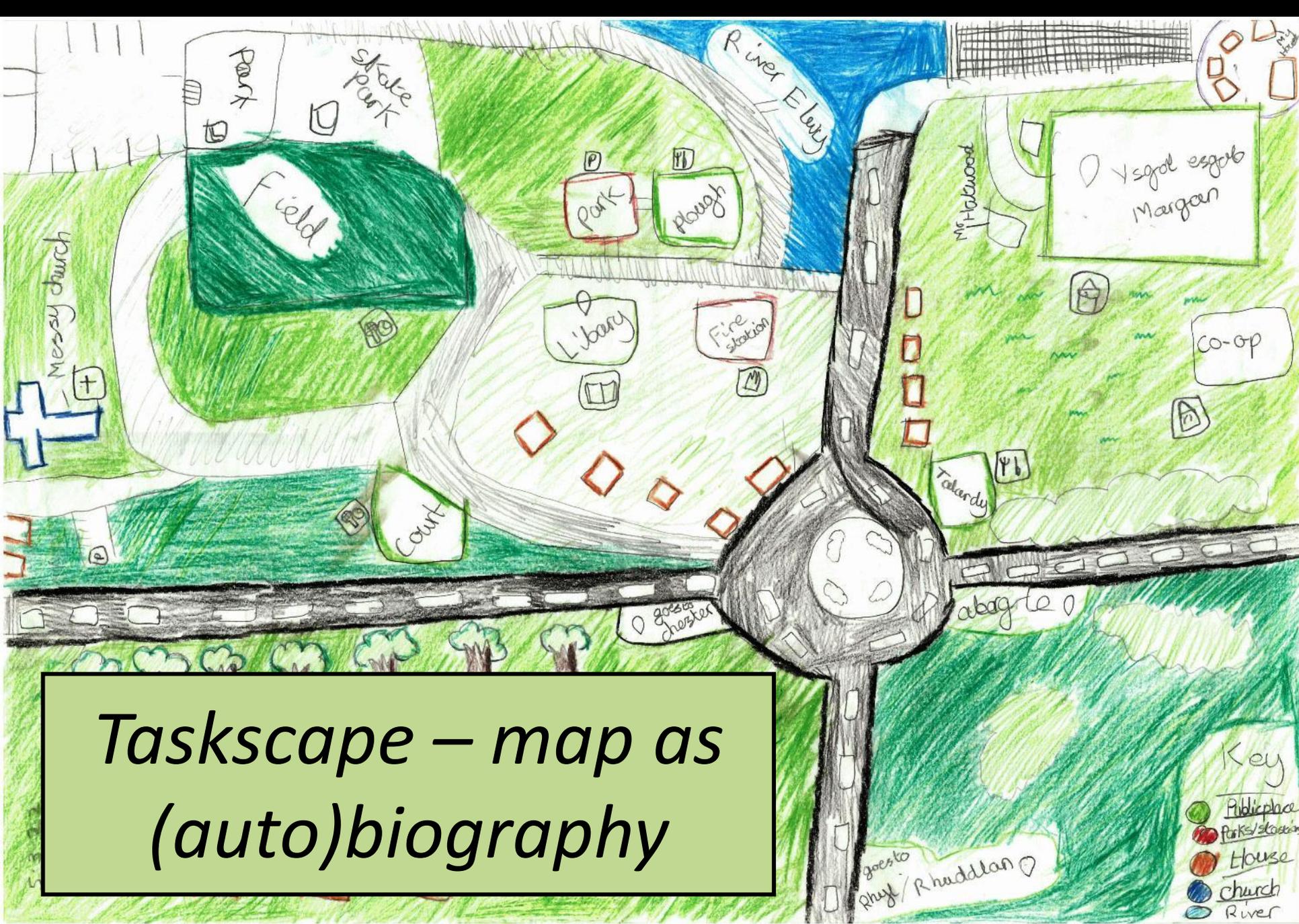
The aim of the project is to involve children from diverse backgrounds and geographical settings to find out what places matter to them.





Key

- Public place
- Parks/stations
- House
- + Church
- ~ River



Taskscape – map as (auto)biography

Mapping with meaning

- Escaping the classroom – *making sense of space and place*
- From the local to the global – *developing empathy*
- Understanding mapping conventions – *shared understanding*
- ‘Digital natives’ – *real lives, real places*

Drawing on [Meaningful Maps](#) research to create education resources for digital spaces

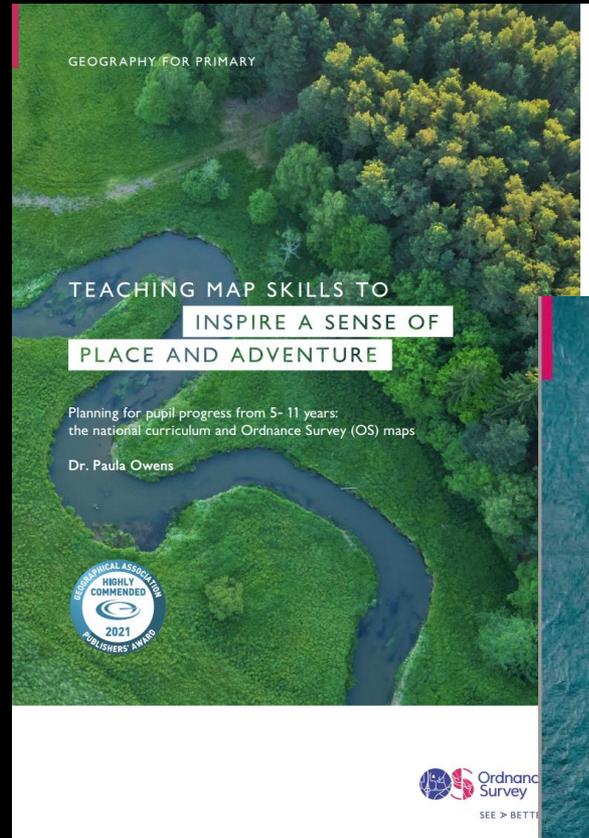
Draw a map of your local area

- Add your home
- You could also add:
 - Where you play, shop and walk
 - Other favourite places
 - Places that have meaning for you
 - Labels and notes.

Royal Geographical Society
with IBG
Advancing geography and geographical learning
Stay Home Stories

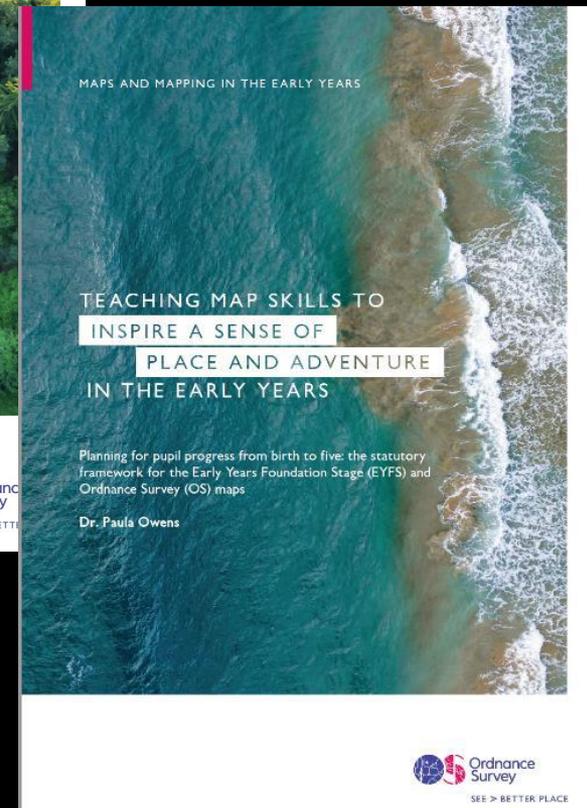
The concept of home is part of the fabric of our lives, inextricably linked with our identity and childhood memories.

[Royal Geographical Society - Geography resources for teachers \(rgs.org\)](#)

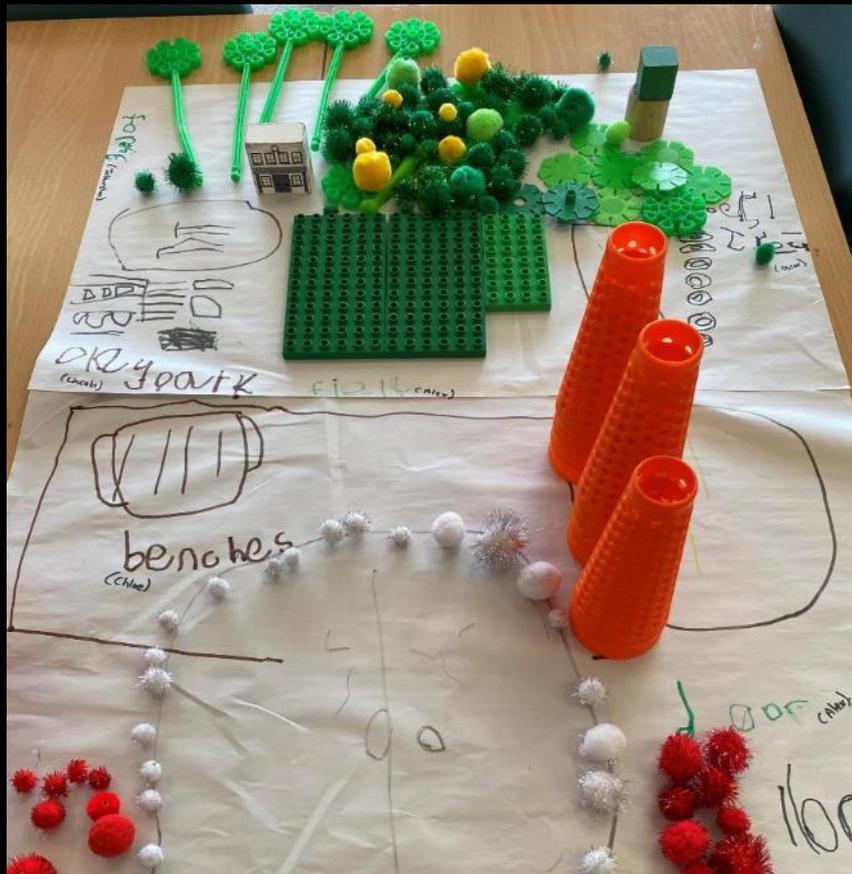


Forthcoming
for Early Years

[Teaching map skills primary national curriculum \(ordnancesurvey.co.uk\)](#)



Context: Children aged 4 and 5 creating maps from memory of their school grounds





A study of toy-play mapping by three-, four-, and five-year-old children demonstrated that children can clearly represent a cognitive map at the age of three and are able to cope with the demands of more formal mapping on school entry (Blaut and Stea 2007).

Context: *three children from Reception class had been working on a map of the school grounds from memory with a Teaching Assistant (TA) and were now recounting what they had done. The TA asked them to start at the 'classroom door' on one edge of the map and take it in turns to talk.*

Child 1: We went out the door

Me: And where did the door go to?

Child 1: Into the school.. (long pause)

Me: Oh so all this is a map of your school grounds?

Child 1: Nods

Me: So what did you map?

Child 2: And ... these are the cones, and that's the field, and that's the forest and that's the class ... (pointing accurately to different parts of the map).

Child 3: And that is the playground (points)

Me: And what do you do in the playground?

Child 3: I play

Me: of course you do! And whose idea was it to use all these lovely colours?

Child 3: Me was doing these (points to yellow fluffy bits on the map) for the buppercups [buttercups]

Me: Buttercups! They're just the right kind of bright yellow aren't they?

Child 3: And that is the tree! (Points to a tree on its own) ... that is a Oak tree (names this unaided).

Child 2: And these are the trees at the forest (points to a line of trees at the edge of the map) and ... I done that bench! (points to a drawing of a bench drawn as a plan view and labelled).

Context: children aged 5 and 6, using OS mapping and aerial imagery to identify their school and surrounds



In 'doing geography' with the child, one is participating in a process which is even more fundamental and therefore more important still: namely, one is in a humble way facilitating the child's very personal development of self-identity which will shape much of their lives, their values, sense of belonging and self-worth.

Spencer (2005) p. 305



Children are remarkably adept at making maps and appear to develop the spatial awareness required from an early age. The maps that they draw not only provide a fascinating insight into their practical engagement with the world but also provide an insight into the places that they value or that worry them.

Vujakovic et al (2018) p.12

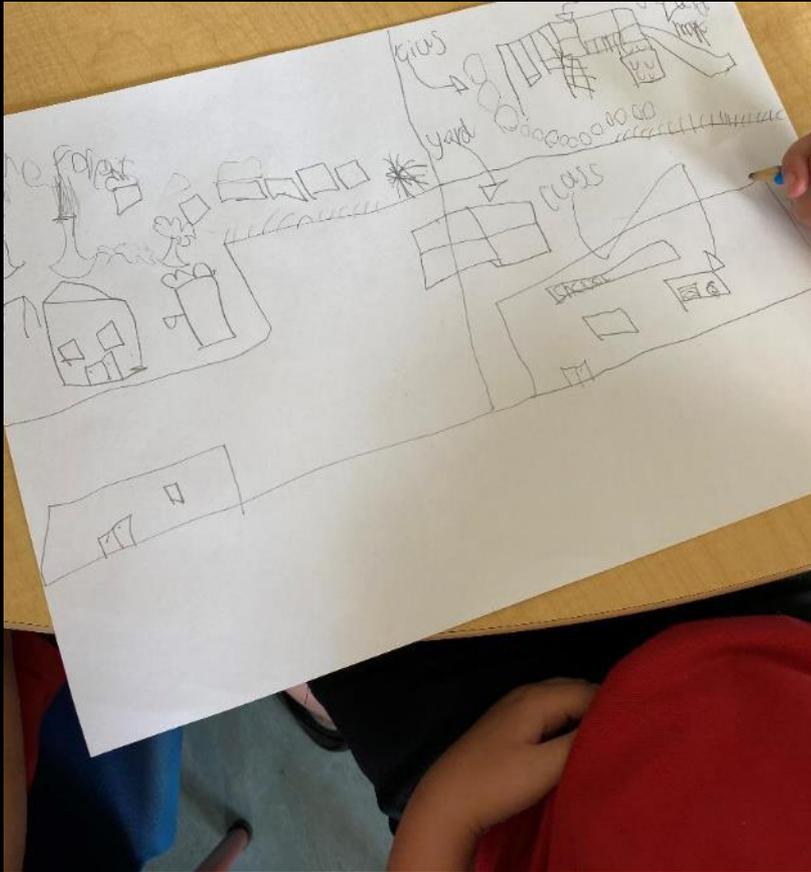


Context: children aged 5 and 6, drawing collaborative maps from memory following fieldwork



The growth of spatial relations is not merely a matter of accumulation or direct teaching about maps or mapping concepts. Children collect a lot of information about their surroundings through their journeys and by exploring their environment. Geist (2016) p.54

Context: children aged 5 and 6, drawing paired maps from memory of the school grounds.



Map and verbal knowledge are thought to have different representations in long term memory storage, referred to as *Dual Coding Theory*, and this is thought to facilitate knowledge retrieval (Wiegand 2006).

Context: children aged 5 and 6, checking their maps through fieldwork



Thank you to the children & staff of Gresford
& Bryn Gwalia Primary Schools
All photographs used with permission

Conclusions

References

Geist, E. (2016) Let's Make a Map: The Developmental Stages of Children's Mapmaking YC Young Children Vol. 71, No. 2 (May 2016), pp. 50-55 Published by: National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

Harley, B. (1987). The Map as biography: Thoughts on Ordnance Survey map, Six-inch Sheet Devonshire CIX, SE, Newton Abbott, The Map Collector, 41, 18-20; reprinted. In M. Dodge, R. Kitchen, & C. Perkins (Eds.), (2011) The Map reader: Theories of mapping practice and cartographic representation (pp. 327–331) Wiley-Blackwell.

Macfarlane, R. and Morris, J. 2017. The Lost Words, Hamish Hamilton Books, London.

Owens, P., Scoffham, S., Vujakovic, P. and Bass, A. (2020) Meaningful Maps, Primary Geography, 102, pp. 15-17.

Spencer, C. (2005) Place Attachment, Place Identity and the Development of the Child's Self- Identity: searching the literature to Develop an Hypothesis. IRGEE Vol14, 4

Vujakovic, P., Owens, P. and Scoffham, S. (2018), Meaningful Maps: What Can We Learn About 'Sense Of Place' From Maps Produced By Children? Bulletin of the Society of Cartographers, 51, 9-20

Vujakovic, P. 2021. Map as biography: maps, memory, and landscape – thoughts on Ordnance Survey map, Sheet TR04, 1:25,000 Provisional Edition, Ashford, International Journal of Cartography, 7 (2), 190-197

Wiegand, P. (2006) Learning and Teaching with Maps

Abstract:

Children are remarkably adept at using and making maps and appear to develop spatial awareness from an early age. The maps that they draw not only provide a fascinating insight into their imaginary world and but also indicate the places that they value and their ideas about their environment. There is considerable discussion about the stages which children go through as they develop their mapwork skills. What seems certain is that children find maps a valuable way to communicate to others and to express their ideas about the world and to that end a meaningful engagement with maps and mapping is essential to their educational development.

This paper explores the experience of the Meaningful Maps team (UK) in engaging with children as map makers but also draws on their individual experience as teachers and researchers, and as writers and consultants - working with UK school atlas publishers, the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation), the UK Ordnance Survey, Geographical Association, and others. It provides evidence for how map education in UK schools might appropriately develop, with examples drawn from recent engagement with teachers and children and the development of on-line materials for young children (Primary age) for the Ordnance Survey Digimap for Schools digital mapping programme. Cont...

Meaningful Maps is a research project concerning children's ideas about their locality through map making (Vujakovic, et al., 2018, Owens et al. 2020). The project includes children from diverse backgrounds and geographical settings to find out what matters to them in their home area. The project (endorsed by the British Cartographic Society and the Geographical Association) has generated over 500 maps by individual children from across the UK. Robert Macfarlane, author of a recent book (Macfarlane and Morris, 2017) that seeks to recover words used to describe the natural world but removed from modern children's dictionaries, makes the point that "We do not care for what we do not know, and on the whole we do not know what we cannot name." Making maps involves drawing and naming, and through this a conscious engagement with place and environment. The maps made by children may be seen as a form of (auto)biography, following from an idea originally set out by the late Brian Harley (Harley, 1987, Vujakovic, 2021), in which their geographic knowledge is developed by actively considering their place in it.

As well as building a local sense of place large-scale mapping and fieldwork leads to better understanding of small-scale maps from regional to global scales. This provides a point of entry to school atlases that are arguably one of the key gateways to pupils' world knowledge, providing comparative and authoritative maps which they can interpret and interrogate in different ways as their horizons expand. Maps become meaningful when pupils see their personal value

Peter Vujakovic is Emeritus Professor of Geography at Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU). He has been studying maps and their impact on education and society more generally since the 1980s. He is a member of the British Cartographic Society (BCS) and Chair of the BCS Education Committee, he is a past Editor and current Associated Editor of the Cartographic Journal. He co-editor of the Routledge Handbook of Mapping and Cartography (2018). He has written numerous articles on maps and mapping for schools for the Geographical Association's Primary Geography and Teaching Geography.

Dr Paula Owens is a Visiting Research Fellow at CCCU and has many years of experience as a primary teacher and deputy head, passionate about high-quality geography education and the value of fieldwork. She is now an author and education consultant and regularly creates resources for the Ordnance Survey Digimap for Schools digital mapping programme. Paula leads fieldwork and CPD with schools across the country, is a mentor and school judge for the Ashden LESSCO2 programme and geography consultant to CBeebies Go Jetters (BBC). She is also a consultant to the Geographical Association, having been their curriculum lead for many years, and a member of their Primary Geography Editorial Board.

Dr Stephen Scoffham is Visiting Reader in Sustainability and Education at CCCU. He is the author of numerous texts on primary school geography and is a long-term author/consultant for Collins school atlases. Stephen's research interests focus on teaching and learning and include primary school geography, the environment, sustainability, intercultural understanding and creativity. Stephen has been a member of the Geographical Association (GA) for many years and its President (2018-19). He is editor of the Primary Geography Handbook (GA 2010) and Teaching Geography Creatively (Routledge 2017) and co-author with Paula Owens of Teaching Primary Geography (Bloomsbury 2016).

Context: Drawing on [Meaningful Maps](#) Research to create education resources for digital spaces

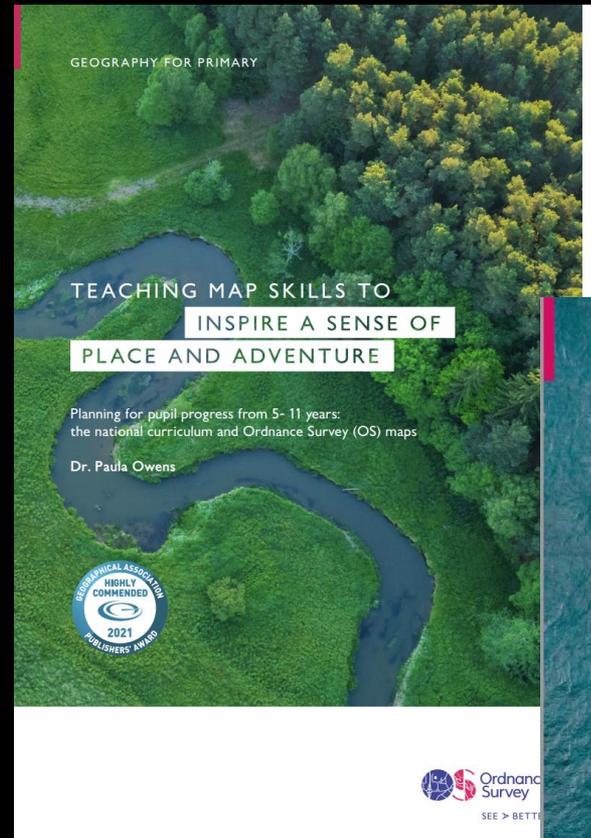
Draw a map of your local area

- Add your home
- You could also add:
 - Where you play, shop and walk
 - Other favourite places
 - Places that have meaning for you
 - Labels and notes.

Royal Geographical Society
with IBG
Advancing geography and geographical learning
Stay Home Stories

The concept of home is part of the fabric of our lives, inextricably linked with our identity and childhood memories.

[Royal Geographical Society - Geography resources for teachers \(rgs.org\)](#)



Forthcoming
for Early Years

[Teaching map skills primary national curriculum \(ordnancesurvey.co.uk\)](#)

